779 family. Babies lacking in merit died at their birth, just as mothers whose merit had run low suffered or died in childbirth.

84 A soul desiring rebirth flew into the womb of a woman at
[775] conception. By care and imitative magical practices, both
774 parents helped the fetus grow but the mother gave the baby its
[789] body. Parturition was a joint effort of mother and child, the course and outcome of which was determined by their respective stores of merit. After delivery the child was blessed, his soul seized and tied in, and ritual means taken that he not wander from home throughout life. A post-partum rest of
846 several days was taken beside a hot fire, the purpose of which
392 was both physiological, i.e. to dry the uterus, and ritual, to bring about full "ripe" adulthood.

The fire, which was consecrated, strengthened a woman and made her a better nourisher, mature, more compassionate, and eligible to handle magic and the tender souls of living creatures. Thus she was fitted for her life-calling as a woman.
793 The comparable ceremony of maturation for men, when they too
789 were changed from "raw" to mature, compassionate, and strong
562 males for their calling of fatherhood and leadership, was ordination into the Buddhist priesthood. Only those men and women who had undergone their respective rites of maturation were eligible to handle magic. Men's magic gave power, control and could be aggressive. Women's magic was limited to
[688] nurturing purposes, and could never be destructive. The respective areas of magical competence and right were autonomous and rigidly separated on pain of severe sanctions.

844 This view of the role of women in life and the events of childbirth in the earthly and cosmic scene, had the effect of giving women in childbirth a positive, secure, and relaxed outlook, and an understanding and acceptance of suffering so that they had little fear.

[128] How careers in midwifery, whether professional or amateur were established, and the nature of the specialty and of a practice are discussed.

128 The understanding of, and the attitudes toward, modern
844 medicine are given along with findings accounting for
846 acceptance or rejection of modern hospital care for parturients. Accepting the changes that were observed in the practices
369 surrounding childbirth proved to be a means of expressing
178 partial withdrawal from the old life of a farmer and a step towards the glitter of urban ways. In the desire to be seen as progressive, the fire rest had been shortened, market products substituted for the consecrated fire, and other urban ways introduced.

000 For persons interested in introducing changes in the

562 789 [754] [787] love philters, and they might be "sealed up" in childbirth or attacked by khun, their capacities to "liang" were inalienable. If any woman tried to tamper with men's magic, a severe sanction fell on her. She became the host of the phī krasū who lived from faeces like a dog.[59] On the other hand in a legendary case a man who tried to perform one of the women's rites to the Rice Mother was destroyed.[60] Furthermore, the Buddhist sanction of sinfulness fell on any man using magic for evil purposes.

562 791 [755] [793] The single channel where women might operate in the men's field of curing, power, clairvoyance, etc. was as a medium (khon song), through possession by a spirit. If possessed by a male mō, she could do everything a mō could do. Men were never mediums. Bang Chan's only medium was possessed by a male mō.[61] During seances she talked and sat like a man, and gave out cures and advice to an eager clientele. Only while wearing the yellow robe of an ordained priest did a man enjoy a generalized eufunction comparable to a woman's nurturing capacity. His powers in many respects were far greater than hers, but limited in her speical province.

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[832] [156] [688] [626] [593] 59. My finding is based on Textor's interesting facts (pp. 305-330). He described the hosts of phī krasū as married women ("never a maiden") in their 30's or 40's, who were "invariably" trying to learn love magic. Such women were, however, violating their sexual function as nurturant and worse, their status as "auk" women, ritually established by the holy fire! Ostracism by the community, implemented by fear of contagion through spittle, lasted even unto the deathbed. The phī krasū's daughter alone was immune while giving the devoted care which was every mother's due in her old age, for Bang Chan desired no alienation of this filial duty even out of fear of the terrible sanction on the mother.

[539] [776] 60. The legend ran that once a man instead of a woman went into the rice field to perform the ritual inviting of the Rice Goddess to stay there and be cared for with food and offerings during her pregnancy. The goddess he met was not an immature and tender child-like spirit, but the adult, pregnant being who was powerful, flirtatious, and frightening. Dazzled by her beauty he fell in love with her, and ran away with her, vanishing forever. The goddess, affronted because an improper person arrived to deal with her, destroyed him.

[825] [787] 61. In Bangkok, monkey, cats, or spirits may also possess women.